

Appendix A - Eligibility criteria and supporting evidence

Brown and white tourist signs are designed to help direct visitors to a tourist destination along the latter stages of their journey. They are not for advertising or promotional purposes and will only be approved if a traffic management need can be proven.

The approval or otherwise will also take into consideration the quality of the visitor experience which is crucial to the long-term viability and growth of tourism in Northumberland. This does not mean that “more” signs or more detailed signs will result. In general, a policy of fewer co-ordinated signs providing clear directions and information will be pursued as this can be more effective and is more aesthetically appropriate to the Northumberland landscape and settlements.

Only in exceptional circumstances (e.g. remote isolated locations or sites away from main routes) will service businesses be named on brown and white signs. Without such management, the perception of competition advantage and the potential for signage clutter will result.

The following criteria are provided as a guide to businesses and attractions who are considering making an application for brown and white tourist signs.

All Applicants

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING EVIDENCE WHICH MAYBE REQUESTED
Adequate on-site parking must normally be available. Where off-site parking is provided or available, this must be within a reasonable distance of the facility (400 metres).	If an advertised car park is not owned by the applicant, written confirmation from the owner is required.
Adequate on-site parking for disabled badge holders must be normally available. Alternatively, a suitable “park and ride” provision should be made.	Evidence of provision for disabled badge holders.
Must not erect any advertising signs at or near the location of the proposed Brown and White Tourism Signs, and must remove any existing off-site signing at their own cost.	Evidence of publicity and details of distribution, e.g. copies of leaflets, adverts, website, promotion, etc.
Facilities must be adequately advertised, including location, opening times, facilities, etc. Where appropriate, public transport access must be adequately advertised.	
Front of house staff must have undertaken adequate Customer Care training (either through a recognised training provider, or adequate in-house training programme).	Evidence that Customer Care training has been undertaken, e.g. training certificates, details of courses undertaken, etc.
Registered/listed with Northumberland Tourism	Evidence of registration/listing with Northumberland Tourism

A: Visitor Attractions (in addition to “All Applicants” criteria and eligibility)

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	ADDDITIONAL SUPPORTING EVIDENCE REQUIRED
Must attract or, if a new business, have the potential to attract a minimum of 5,000 visitors per year, unless the need can be clearly demonstrated on road safety and traffic management grounds.	Evidence of annual visitor numbers or a business plan.
Must be able to demonstrate that a substantial proportion of visitors are attracted from outside the local area.	Evidence of the source of visitors or a business plan.
Must be open for a minimum of 6 consecutive months between March and October every year, including 24 weekend days within that period.	Details of annual opening times.
Must have signed up or is intending to sign up to the VisitEngland National Code of Practice for Visitor Attractions. (More details can be found on the VisitEngland website).	Evidence that the attraction has signed up to the Visit England Code of Practice.

B: Serviced Accommodation (in addition to “All Applicants” criteria and eligibility)

Serviced accommodation will not normally be signed unless a traffic management or traffic safety need can be proven. Almost without exception, such establishment will have their own on site signs either on the building or within the confines of the premises and will therefore have no identifiable need for brown and white signs.

Establishments situated in remote locations or away from main routes may be considered for signing for traffic management purposes and to enhance and serve the visitor experience. Any establishment which satisfies these conditions will also need to satisfy the following eligibility criteria.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	ADDDITIONAL SUPPORTING EVIDENCE WHICH MAYBE REQUESTED
Must participate in a nationally recognised Quality Assurance Scheme e.g. VisitBritain, AA, etc.	Written evidence of an up-to-date Quality Assurance Scheme grading.
Must comply with the Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations and Food Safety Act 1990.	Up-to-date evidence that meets Food Safety Regulations i.e. confirmation of a Department of Health Inspection.

Note: Serviced accommodation catering for long term residents which are therefore in affect hostel type houses in multiple occupation are not eligible.

C: Self-Catering Accommodation

Self-catering establishments will not normally be signed as the nature of the business is via pre-booking and therefore not ordinarily available to provide a service to passing trade. It is also assumed that proprietors of such establishments will provide their clients with adequate access/directional instructions.

D: Public Houses (in addition to “All Applicants” criteria and eligibility)

Public houses will not normally be signed unless a traffic management or traffic safety need can be proven. Almost without exception, such establishment will have their own on site signs either on the building or within the confines of the premises and will therefore have no identifiable need for brown and white signs.

Establishments situated in remote locations or away from main routes may be considered for signing for traffic management purposes and to enhance and serve the visitor experience. Any establishment which satisfies these conditions will also need to satisfy the following eligibility criteria.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING EVIDENCE WHICH MAYBE REQUESTED
Must be of recognised local/historical importance.	Evidence that it is of recognised local/historical importance.
A selection of hot meals must be served both at lunchtimes and in the evening to both pre-booked and casual visitors.	Details of opening times, times food is served and sample menus.
Must comply with the Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations and Food Safety Act 1990.	Up-to-date evidence that meets Food Safety Regulations i.e. confirmation of a Department of Health Inspection.
If offering overnight accommodation, must meet Serviced Accommodation eligibility criteria as listed in Section B.	If offering accommodation, written evidence of an up-to date Quality Assurance Scheme grading.
Must be willing to accommodate children Indoors and have appropriate facilities.	

E: Restaurants and Cafes (in addition to “All Applicants” criteria and eligibility)

Restaurants and cafes will not normally be signed unless a traffic management or traffic safety need can be proven. Almost without exception, such establishment will have their own on site signs either on the building or within the confines of the premises and will therefore have no identifiable need for brown and white signs.

Establishments situated in remote locations or away from main routes may be considered for signing for traffic management purposes and to enhance and serve the visitor experience. Any establishment which satisfies these conditions will also need to satisfy the following eligibility criteria.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING EVIDENCE WHICH MAYBE REQUESTED
Opening hours should be at least 6 hours a day, 6 days a week, for 6 months a year.	Details of opening times and sample menus.
Should be open to both pre-booked and casual visitors.	
Must comply with the Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations and Food Safety Act 1990.	Up-to-date evidence that meets Food Safety Regulations i.e. confirmation of a Department of Health Inspection.

F: Retail Establishments (in addition to “All Applicants” criteria and eligibility)

Retail parks, shopping centres, garden centres, supermarkets and out of town supermarkets/superstores, are not eligible for tourism signing. The case for signing other retail establishments will be based on the following eligibility criteria.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING EVIDENCE REQUIRED
Must be of particular interest to the tourism market and have facilities and features that are specifically aimed at tourists.	Evidence of the facilities’ special interest to tourists and publicity aimed at visitors from outside of the local area.
Should have adequate toilet facilities and be able to offer light refreshments where appropriate.	
Should offer at least one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tours of facilities or demonstrations • Interpretative displays for tourists. 	Evidence of tours/demonstrations if appropriate.

G: Recreational Facilities (in addition to “All Applicants” criteria and eligibility)

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING EVIDENCE REQUIRED
Should be open for at least 100 days per year and for at least 400 hours during that period.	Details of opening times.
Should be open to non-members within normal opening hours and where necessary equipment should be available for hire.	
Should have adequate toilet facilities and be able to offer light refreshments where appropriate.	

H: Cinemas / Theatres (in addition to “All Applicants” criteria and eligibility)

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING EVIDENCE REQUIRED
Should be open to non-members within normal opening hours and where necessary equipment should be available for hire.	
Should have adequate toilet facilities and be able to offer light refreshments where appropriate.	

I: Camping and Caravan Sites (in addition to “All Applicants” criteria and eligibility)

These signs will be provided for the benefit of touring caravan users and campers from outside the local area, who wish to make casual overnight or short stays.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING EVIDENCE REQUIRED
Either participate in a nationally approved Quality Assurance Scheme, e.g. VisitBritain, AA or be under the membership of the Caravan Club or Camping and Caravanning Club.	Evidence of up-to-date Quality Assurance Scheme grading or membership of the Caravan Club/Camping and Caravanning Club.
Should have at least 20 pitches for casual overnight use by touring caravans or tents.	Details of facilities offered on-site, including number of pitches.
Must be open to non-members without the need to pre-book.	
Must be licensed under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and/or the Public Health Act 1936.	Evidence of up to date licensing.
Must comply with the Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations and Food Safety Act 1990.	Up-to-date evidence that meets Food Safety Regulations i.e. confirmation of a Department of Health Inspection.

J: Youth Hostels (in addition to “All Applicants” criteria and eligibility)

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING EVIDENCE REQUIRED
Must be open without the need for prior booking during normal opening hours.	Evidence of management arrangements.
Hostels managed by the Youth Hostel Association may be granted tourism signs with the YHA symbol. Other hostels may be signed, but not with the YHA Symbol.	

K: Tourist Information Centres and Tourist Information Points (in addition to “All Applicants” criteria and eligibility)

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING EVIDENCE REQUIRED
Must be recognised by Northumberland Tourism in order to be signed with the recognised symbol	Up to date evidence of recognition by Northumberland Tourism.

L: Bypassed Communities - Local Services (in addition to “All Applicants” criteria and eligibility)

These signs are provided for the benefit of drivers to highlight the availability of services, during working hours, in a bypassed community. Encouragement of this traffic must be acceptable to the local community as a whole and should be determined by the appropriate Town/Parish Council. If a community has tourist facilities which qualify for tourism signs these may be included on the local services sign in the form of a small standard symbol. Individual qualifying attractions may also be eligible for other tourism signs within the bypassed community. A descriptive phrase which refers

to the history of the community, the attractions present or important features may be included. (For example 'Historic Market Town')

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	ADDDITIONAL SUPPORTING EVIDENCE WHICH MAYBE REQUESTED
The community must usually be a small town or village with a population of less than 10,000.	
The community must offer a variety of services to visitors from outside of the local area. These might include adequate parking and public toilets (both must be clearly signed within the community), shops and/or refreshments.	Details of the services offered within the community.
The community must be within 2 miles of the road from which the services are to be signed, and be the first community reached after leaving that road.	

Urban Facilities

The criteria for facilities in urban areas are the same as those detailed in points A to L above.

In urban areas, the number of establishments that are eligible for tourism signing can lead to a large number of signs which can lead to clutter and confusion. In order to prevent potential problems individual attractions will only be signed in exceptional circumstances. Generic or shared signing will be preferred, subject to environmental and traffic management considerations. These generic signs will incorporate symbols or any reasonable term requested by the applicant.

In urban areas, generic pedestrian signs may be considered in order to direct visitors from car parks and public transport facilities. Generic signs can incorporate any reasonable collective term requested by the applicants. To complement existing pedestrian signs in urban areas, this type of tourism sign should be consistent with existing design. Positioning and design should be developed in consultation with the relevant County Council sections and the Town/Parish Council.

For the purpose of this policy 'Urban' relates to the settlements of Berwick-upon-Tweed, Alnwick, Morpeth, Ashington, Blyth, Bedlington, Cramlington, Prudhoe and Hexham.

Rural Community Signing

These signs are provided where there may be several tourist facilities in one rural community. Such schemes might incorporate:

- A local information board, with the words 'Local Information'
- Supplementary plates attached to the village name plates which could be erected at the village entry points.
- Signing within the settlement should direct the traffic to adequate car parking facilities where possible.
- Individual attractions should be signed with pedestrian signs from car parks. It may also be possible for the local information points to be provided at car parks to highlight the location of facilities.

Signs will be developed in consultation with Parish/Town Councils who may also wish to consult business interests. The local Town/Parish council will be responsible for deciding the detail and content of individual rural community signing schemes.

Protected Landscapes (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty & National Park)

In order to balance environmental considerations with the needs of the local tourist industry, a co-ordinated approach is necessary. Consideration may be given to the signing of tourist attractions however the signing of individual establishments will not be permitted. A sign located on the boundary of a town/village showing the appropriate symbols for relevant facilities within the conservation area may be considered.

Signs and Facilities on Trunk Roads

There are additional rules for tourism signs on trunk roads and it is necessary to involve the Highways Agency in this type of application. A minimum number of visitors for all tourist attractions signed from trunk roads is applied.

TRUNK ROAD TYPE	MINIMUM NUMBER OF VISITORS PER YEAR
Dual carriageways with a speed limit of 50 mph or more	150,000
Other dual carriageways	100,000
Single carriageways	40,000

Achieving the anticipated visitor numbers does not confer automatic entitlement to tourist signs. Other factors will also need to be considered.

Aftercare and Removal

The signs will remain in the ownership of the County Council or Highways Agency as appropriate.

Northumberland County Council shall be entitled to remove, reposition or alter the design of the signs if it considers it necessary to do so, in the interests of road safety and traffic management, or for the purpose of accommodating other traffic signs. Signs may also be removed, repositioned or altered as a result of anything contained in any legislative requirement or direction of the Secretary of State.

In the event of damage to signs where costs cannot be attained from a third party or a need for their replacement arising as a result of normal wear and tear the Council will, as soon as practicable, arrange for the appropriate work of repair or replacement of the signs. In the event of such works of repair or replacement being carried out the applicant will reimburse the actual costs of the works.

If the attraction or facility closes down, or fails to meet the standards required for tourist attractions/facility signing, the signs shall be removed by the County Council, providing that the Council give 28 days notice of the intention to remove the signs to the applicant.

Signs which have been erected by businesses, either for advertising or directional purposes, which have not received the appropriate statutory planning and/or highways approvals, shall be removed by the County Council providing that the council give 28 days notice of the intention to remove the sign to the applicant. Any incurred removal costs will be recovered from the business/attraction in question.